



Center for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage TELESCOPE - MESSENGER United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

Vol. 9 no. 2

Summer 1999

BONEBRAKE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY: A STUDENT'S RECOLLECTIONS, 1939-42

by Bernard Cook

It began with Dean C. E. Ashcraft's visit to York College in spring 1939. With my future wife Doris I was interviewed as a possible seminarian, but we were concerned about the expenses, for we had no funds. From our past job experiences, he said Doris could probably qualify as one of the kitchen cooks since she had cooked for harvest hands in Kansas for several years. And I could be the general handyman who wrestled five-gallon cans of milk, peeled bushels of potatoes and carrots in the mechanical peeler, made coffee by the gallons, etc.. Our combined wages would pay for board and room, tuition, and incidentals, with some left over to pay other living expenses. Those jobs were confirmed by letter a few weeks later.

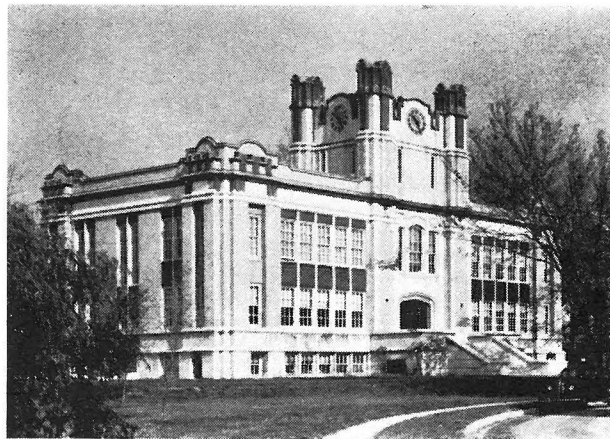
In early September we arrived in Dayton via the Pennsylvania Railroad, took our first electric trolley-bus ride to Upper Dayton View, and walked from the bus stop at Salem and Otterbein Avenues to the seminary, carrying our suitcases. We were greeted by Miss Myrtle Fogel, matron of Fout Hall and dining hall supervisor. After being shown to our apartment, we met with the two other cooks and Miss Fogel to learn our duties in the kitchen, beginning the next morning.

At that time four buildings were on the campus: Fout Hall which housed all resident students plus a kitchen-dining hall, storage and laundry room; the Administration Building which served as classrooms, library and chapel, in addition to business offices; the power house which supplied heat and general maintenance for the campus; and the President's residence. The student body numbered approximately 100, of whom two were women. About ten students were in the Diploma School, a program for persons without college degrees who were being trained for the ministry; this program was being phased out as the institution was becoming a full graduate school.

The dining hall occupied half the large basement room. Small square tables to which families were assigned were along the outside walls. Single students' tables, seating eight or more, were in the center. White tablecloths were provided, to be laundered by the recipients, although the single students' cloths were cared for by the management.

Meals were served cafeteria-style, each meal being a different entrée over a two-week period, with choices of two vegetables, potatoes, salad and dessert.

After all were served, the remaining food was put on the kitchen serving tables for "seconds," which pleased the heavy eaters. When the meal ended, each



Administration and Classroom Building



In a Student's Room

table's occupants carried their dirty dishes to the dishwasher stand, where students paid by the school operated the mechanical dishwasher and dried the dishes in preparation for the next meal.

In addition to students, due to the tight financial situation of the seminary two professors' families lived in Fout Hall and ate in the dining hall. They were Dr. and Mrs. Merle Harner and their three girls, and Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Behney. By 1941, improved finances enabled both families to secure their own homes. Only two student couples had children--Don and Martha Hochstettler and the Warren Suttons. However, more children were added each year as couples started their families.

In 1939-40 President Walter Roberts, in addition to administrative duties, taught classes in Church Administration and Pastoral Theology. Full-time professors were Dr. A. T. Howard for Missions and Ethics; Dr. Walter Roush for Old Testament and Hebrew; Dr. Merle Harner for New Testament and Greek; Dr. Bruce Behney for Church History and Systematic Theology; and Dean Ashcraft dealt with Psychology of Religion and related subjects, plus a course on thesis writing. Starting in the Fall 1940 term, Dr. D. H. Gilliatt taught courses in Pastoral Counseling and Homiletics.

Classes met in the mornings, Tuesdays through Fridays, with an occasional afternoon class for students who could attend. Most students had part-time jobs or student pastorates. Afternoons were coveted for study, as well as evenings for library research or family duties. The small library space limited the number of students who could study there, and limited research due to the number of volumes that could be accommodated.

Each class-day chapel services were conducted. Usually professors spoke or presided for guest speakers. On Fridays a senior student was responsible for the service--planning the music, prayers, and delivering the sermon. Sometimes this was the student body's only chance to hear a "future bishop" or aspiring outstanding preacher. And who could be sharper critics than one's peers?

Miss Martha McDonald was the seminary treasurer and bookkeeper. Dr. Roberts' secretary was a student's wife. Students without pastorates, and some with them, worked in department stores, hotels, manufacturing plants and offices to support

themselves. The local YMCA used at least two students, of whom I was one, acting as Boys' Department desk-clerk three nights a week and conducting Gra-Y Clubs in two schools twice a week. The approaching war made jobs easy to find, and wages were good.

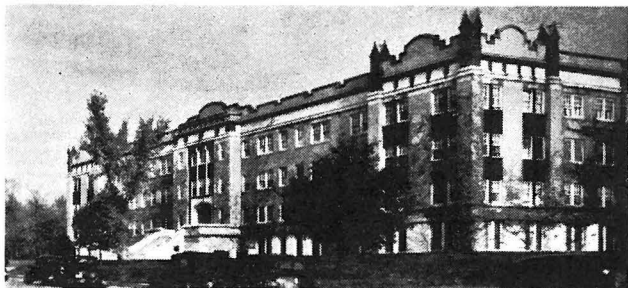
During my second year an opportunity to student-preach appeared. It was at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg, Ohio, located on U.S. 40 in a rural area west of Dayton. I applied and was accepted as pastor of the small congregation. The Stated Clerk (equivalent to our D.S.), said, "I don't think you can hurt them any." (Quite a vote of confidence!) While returning to Dayton on Sunday, December 7, 1941, I stopped at a service station in Lewisburg, Ohio. The attendant shouted, "They're 'booming' Pearl Harbor!" (That's exactly how he pronounced it!) The next noon all dormitory residents sat in the dining hall, and over a radio loud-speaker heard President Roosevelt ask for a declaration of war on Japan. This brought home why Dayton's factories had been so busy. Rationing of sugar soon required the dormitory to ask all students to turn in their sugar allotments so they could be used by the kitchen in meal preparation.

The fact of war touched the campus when the FBI appeared seeking a Japanese student, Fumio Koike, who had left the U.S. six months before. But a Filipino student, Severino Ochoko, was questioned, as was Solomon Caulker from Sierra Leone, West Africa. All campus "foreigners," it seems, were suspect, but none received more than casual inquiries.

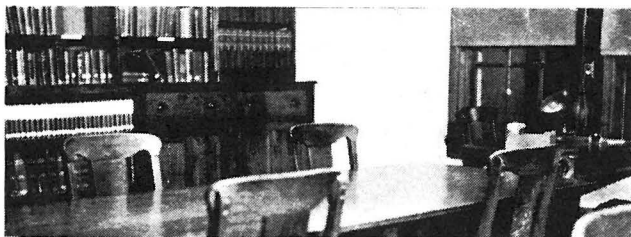
With a small student body there were numerous opportunities for close contact and interaction with faculty members. The death of Dean Ashcraft's wife, and later his son, brought a realization of our mortality and mutuality. Dr. Gilliatt's wife organized a seminary chorus. Dr. Behney played handball with some students and was catcher on the school baseball team, which Dean Ashcraft coached. (Incidentally, the Dean was an avid tennis player with a wicked left-hand serve!) And who could forget Dr. Roush participating in a "folk dance" as a part of an all-seminary celebration, or his tests in class, one of which read: "The answers to the test are on the board. You supply the questions for them." Then there was Dr. Gilliatt's understanding counsel with first-year students whose faith was "shaken" by their

first contact with "textual criticism" of the Bible. He also introduced use of a "wire recorder" for student sermons in Homiletics. Dr. A. T. Howard's vast mission experience made the mission field come alive. (He had been a "missionary bishop" until the Depression caused the position to be eliminated.) Nor could anyone forget Dr. Roberts' practical advice in Church Administration about stewardship and financial campaigns: "Never apologize for asking someone for money for the Lord's work. You are doing that person a favor by helping him establish a right relationship between the Lord and their possessions."

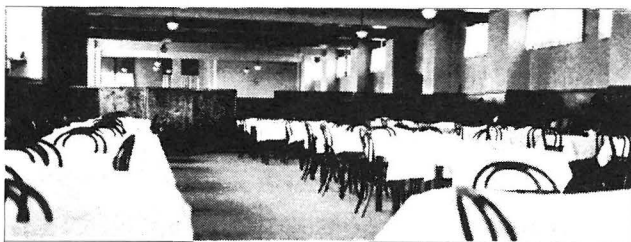
Thus were we exposed to diverse human experiences, ranging from the divine sublime to the almost ridiculous facts of life. But out of it came that rare trait of utter loyalty and appreciation for Bonebrake Seminary, its faculty, and the successor institution United Theological Seminary.



The Dormitory



In the Library



The Dining Room

The photographs of scenes from campus life used to illustrate this article were originally published in *The Bonebrake Theological Seminary Bulletin, Annual Catalogue*, beginning with the 1941 issue. The "Administration and Classroom Building" is now known as Bonebrake Hall; "The Dormitory" as Fout Hall.

GOD'S MAN: JOHN CALVIN MCNAMAR

by Robert W. Koenig

On a beautiful late October day just prior to All-Saints Sunday, 1998, two retired United Methodist pastors rediscovered the grave of an early United Brethren "saint" who left an indelible mark on the "United" segment of the present United Methodist Church. The Revs. Ivan Steed and Robert Koenig, accompanied by Jerry Stephens, an Owen County layman also molded in the United Brethren tradition, trekked through rugged wooded country with no marked trail to the southern Indiana grave of the Rev. John McNamar in the northwest corner of Owen County near the Clay County line. A service of worship, including Scripture from Hebrews 11-12, prayers of thanksgiving, and a simple "love feast," was held by the trio of grateful explorers.

McNamar, born in 1779 in Virginia, of Scottish descent, is described as "a small lithe, sharp-visaged, witty man, careless of his temporal interests." He was the first English-speaking preacher of the Ohio-Indiana segment of the dominantly German Church of the United Brethren in Christ. He founded numerous churches in southwestern Ohio and southern Indiana. One of these was the Old Union Church in Orange County where both Steed and Koenig had served as pastors in earlier life. Other Indiana churches also owing their initial life to this spirit-guided courageous pioneer were the following: Hopewell and Elrod in Ripley County, "Old" Franklin in Franklin County, Abington in Wayne County, and Gerrard Chapel and Union in Owen County. McNamar also established churches in Warren County, Ohio.

The first ten years of his thirty-six-year ministry were spent in southwest Ohio, and the remainder in southern Indiana where he served as Presiding Elder of the Whitewater District of the former Miami Conference. He served, in the absence of Bishop Henry Kumler, Sr., as presiding bishop *pro tem* of the newly formed Indiana Annual Conference sessions of 1831, 1834, and 1835. He was formally elected to succeed Christian Newcomer as bishop at the 1833 General Conference, but for unknown reasons declined to serve.

John McNamar blended eloquent evangelistic preaching with administrative statesmanship. He was converted under the preaching of a German-speaking

minister in Germantown, Ohio, where he taught school. He clearly saw, when the United Brethren Church was still a young but rigidly "*deutsch*" denomination, the imperative need for English-speaking preachers. In the first six years of his itineracy he motivated eight English-speaking preachers to be added to the Miami Conference roster. The church grew rapidly because of this stretching of language boundaries.

He also was concerned that the church adequately support its clergy if it was "to grow and produce abiding results." Under his leadership the General Conference of 1826 approved the appointment of a steward for every circuit and also one for each "class." They were to make a quarterly collection, in money or goods, for the preacher in charge and report to each Quarterly Conference. Probably one reason he was so sensitive to this need is that in 1825 he received only \$41.16 for his year's work.

Almost nothing is known of his wife and children, although tradition tells us one son is buried with his father at the Owen County gravesite. One wonders and marvels, however, at the commitment, grace and flexibility that must have marked the life of Mrs. McNamar.

John McNamar was primarily a preacher of the Gospel. In John Lawrence's *The History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (1861) is this description: "He used correct and forcible language; spoke slowly and distinctly, pronouncing every word. . . . His sermons on the divinity of Christ, often preached to immense congregations at camp meetings, made a profound impression."

When the challenges of ministry seem almost overwhelming for present day preachers, it is strengthening to remember the determination and steadfastness of saints of another day such as John McNamar. John Bonebrake wrote:

He was a man of superb courage . . . paths and roads were often useless. If his horse could not carry him, he led the horse, or leaving the horse behind, went on foot. He frequently slept in the wilderness but was never lost. . . . As an itinerant he was an example of punctuality. When the time arrived for him to start an appointment, he was off. He would wait for no one, and listened to no excuses. Rain, snow, mud, swollen streams, and flooding causeways---any of these,

or all of them combined, could not change his purpose.

McNamar was buried in 1846 at the age of sixty-seven. No marker was placed at his grave, however, until 1923 when leaders of the former White River Conference raised \$80 for such a memorial. The epitaph on the handsome limestone marker reads:

IN MEMORY OF
REV. JOHN C. McNAMAR
BORN 1779 - DIED 1846
PRESIDING ELDER, BISHOP PRO TEM
FIRST ENGLISH SPEAKING PREACHER IN
UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

The sensitive poet Susan Coolidge has written: "One small life in God's great plan, how futile it seems as the ages roll. . . ." However, as we stood under the multi-colored maple, beech and poplar trees on a beautiful autumn day around the grave-marker of John Calvin McNamar, we could say, "His was not a futile life in God's great plan." We give thanks!

About This Issue:

Bernard L. Cook (UTS '42), retired Field Representative-Western Region, National Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, UMC, resides in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Robert W. Koenig (UTS '50) continues to pastor the rural Pleasant Hill UM Church following his retirement as minister and District Superintendent. He lives in Plainville, Indiana.

Millard J. Miller (UTS '33), retired Pastor, District Superintendent, General Church officer and longtime member of the Center's Advisory Board, resides at the Otterbein-Lebanon Retirement Community, Lebanon, Ohio.

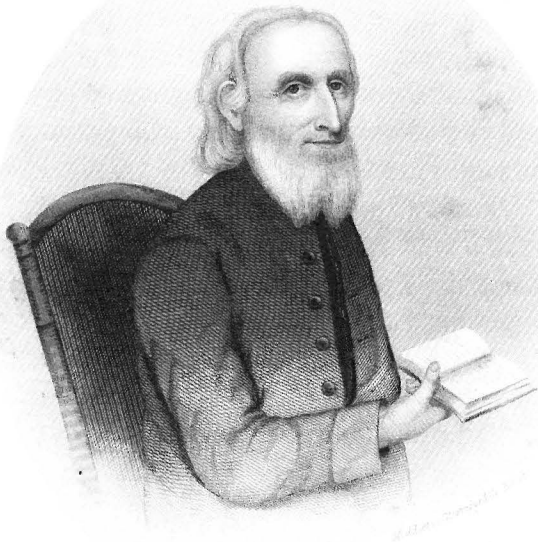
Donald K. Gorrell, Professor Emeritus of Church History, UTS, is editor of the *Telescope-Messenger*.

It will be noted that this issue contains articles only about the United Brethren heritage. Our next issue, Winter 2000, will deal with the bicentennials of the Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. A third issue, Summer 2000, will be made up primarily of articles about the Evangelical heritage.

BICENTENNIAL BACKGROUND

by Donald K. Gorrell

Martin Boehm, although less well known than Philip William Otterbein, is recognized as co-leader of the group of preachers who formed the United Brethren in Christ. The two were unlike in many ways, but considered themselves brothers in the task of proclaiming Christ as Savior to German-speaking people in the new United States of America from 1767 to 1813.



Martin Boehm

In contrast to Otterbein, the European-born, well-educated ordained German Reformed pastor, Martin Boehm (1725-1812), was an American-born son of a German immigrant who was a farmer, blacksmith and lay elder in the Society of Mennonites. Martin followed in his father's footsteps, married Eve Steiner in 1753, and also became a Mennonite preacher when his home congregation selected him by lot three years later. In that role he felt inadequate leading others to salvation until he experienced personal redemption by God while plowing a field. With that assurance he became an impassioned preacher, which offended Mennonite formalism and led them to expel him as too "evangelical."

During that era of America's Great Awakening, Martin often attended revival type "great meetings" in open air or barns, where he preached among other

evangelicals. After preaching at such a meeting in Isaac Long's barn about 1767, he was embraced by William Otterbein who declared, "*Wir sind Brüder*" ("We are brothers"). That experience led not only to continuing association by the two but also to their becoming co-leaders of an informal religious fellowship with other preachers that eventually led to the formation of the United Brethren in Christ denomination. Among the thirteen members at its first Annual Conference, September 25, 1800, were men from Reformed, Mennonite and Lutheran backgrounds, united more by pietistic religious zeal than by church membership. Otterbein and Boehm were chosen as the first superintendents or bishops by the new group, and continued as such until their deaths, but both exercised little leadership after 1805 due to declining health and old age.

Martin's evangelical ecumenism was evident also in his family. After leaving the Mennonites he turned his farm over to son Jacob in order to devote full attention to traveling and preaching among Germans in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. As the newly arrived Methodist movement penetrated the region, about 1775 one of its classes was formed at Boehm's home, with his wife and children as active members. In 1791 an acre of Boehm family land was donated to the Methodist Conference, and Boehm's Chapel and cemetery were built there. (Today it is a United Methodist Heritage Landmark, whose bicentennial was celebrated in 1991--described in a story in the *Telescope-Messenger*, Summer 1991 issue.)

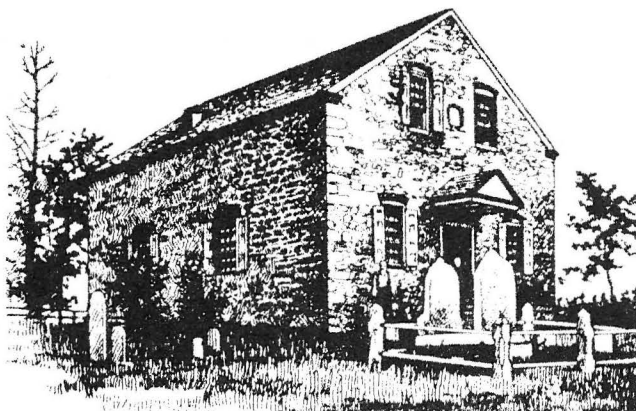
Henry, youngest son of Martin and Eve, became a lifelong Methodist itinerant preacher who was traveling companion of Bishop Francis Asbury from 1808 to 1813. Bishop Asbury envisioned a bilingual ministry among German-speaking Americans until they became acculturated. By 1809 the Methodist Baltimore Conference invited the German United Brethren "to establish a closer and more permanent union among us" that initiated merger talks for several years. According to Christian Newcomer's *Journal*, the last time Martin Boehm and William Otterbein were together was in March 1810 at a meeting in Asbury's lodgings in Baltimore, to discuss such a union. Martin died March 23, 1812; as soon as Asbury learned of it, he and companion Henry hurried to the Boehm home. The next Sunday the bishop wrote in his *Journal*: "I preached at Boehm's

bishop wrote in his *Journal*: "I preached at Boehm's Chapel the funeral sermon of Martin Boehm," whom he called "my dear old friend." At age 86 Martin was buried there.

The excerpts from Newcomer's *Journal* that follow indicate how Martin and others shared in collegial, evangelical and interdenominational preaching and ministry during three weeks in May and June, 200 years ago.

[May 18, 1799] . . . This day a Quarterly meeting commenced at Nafzinger's. . . Here I met my worthy old Brother Martin Boehm, he spoke after me, so did Kreider and Draksel. . .

Sunday 19th--This morning I was enabled to rejoice in love feast; at public preaching, a great multitude of people were assembled, but I fear very ignorant and obdurate. Br. Martin Boehm preached the first sermon, other brethren followed, myself and Boehm administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. . . 21st--A two-days' meeting commenced at John Zellers'; Brs. Crum, Kreider and Boehm delivered their messages to the people. . . 22d--This day a great multitude of people had assembled: Br. Boehm spoke with uncommon power. The ordinance of



Boehm's Chapel as it appeared in 1791

the Lord's Supper was administered, but all did not seem to make any great impression on the hearts of the people: may God have mercy on them. 23d--This day we preached at Shafer's-town; in the afternoon we heard Mr. Rahausen, a German Presbyterian minister, preach. . . 26th--This day a two-days' meeting is to commence at Mr. Kreider's, in Dauphin County: may the Lord grant his blessing that sinners may be converted,

and believers have their spiritual strength renewed, for Jesus' sake--Amen. . .

. . . 29th--I preached at Br. Martin Boehm's, and lodged with John Miller. 30th--This day I spoke at Knegis's, an Omish [Amish] man, to a small but attentive congregation; came to my father's-in-law, and staid for the night. . .

June 1st--To-day a Sacramental meeting commenced at Br. Isaac Long's; on our arrival at the place appointed we found Brs. Boehm, Fremmer, Neidig, Grosh, Kreider and Shuey; Br. Fremmer commenced the meeting, other brethren spoke after him. At night we had a happy meeting at Abr. Hershey's; the friends were revived; many were made so happy in the Lord, that they shouted for joy, and gave praises to God that ever the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Sunday 2d--This morning we had our Love feast; it was truly a feast full of love and liberty: praise the Lord. The congregation was very numerous; I preached first, from Luke 17; v. 12, 13, 14; Brother Boehm followed me. After preaching, we administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; many came with tears to the Lord's table. . . 4th--This forenoon I preached at a Mennonite meeting house. . . 6th--This morning I set out very early; stopped at John Herbaugh's, for refreshment; thence I rode home, found my family well; but John Newcomer, a son of brother Henry, had departed this life, during my absence. 7th and 8th--I tarried at home.

(*Christian Newcomer: His Life and Journal*, Abram W. Sangrey, Editor. Lancaster, PA.; The Philip William Otterbein District, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church, 1996, pp. 54-55.) [This edition contains a facsimile reprint of the original John Hildt edition of 1834.]

Telescope-Messenger

is published twice yearly by the Center
for the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage
United Theological Seminary, 1810 Harvard Blvd.
Dayton, OH 45406-4599

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BICENTENNIALS TO BE OBSERVED
AT
GENERAL CONFERENCE IN CLEVELAND

NEW HISTORY OF U.B. CHURCH IN JAPAN

The Juji-machi Church in Odawara, Japan, has recently compiled and published in Japanese a 600-page record of their 100 years' history. A product of the Japan mission outreach of the United Brethren Church, the Juji-machi Church, when embarking on this project, requested Javan R. Corl (UTS '53), retired veteran missionary to Japan, to write in Japanese a summary history of the American Church of the United Brethren in Christ for inclusion within the Juji-machi history. Corl's manuscript, probably the longest in Japanese treating of American U.B. Church history, begins with the birth of Philip William Otterbein in 1726 and concludes with church union with the Evangelical Church in 1946.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

If an asterisk (*) appears beside your name on page eight of this issue, your membership in The Center has expired. To renew your membership please use the form below as directed. Kindly consider the various levels of membership and be as generous as you are able. The work of The Center needs your support. **THANK YOU!**

Responding to a proposal submitted by the Center for the EUB Heritage, the General Conference Commission of the United Methodist Church has set aside twelve minutes of Thursday morning, May 4, 2000 for presentation of a multimedia celebration of the 200th anniversaries of the Evangelical Association and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Although the founding events in 1800 were significantly different in character, their Golden Anniversaries were celebrated by both communions in 1850, as were their Centennials in 1900. In 1950 their birthdays were joined into a single Sesqui-centennial remembrance by the Evangelical United Brethren Church. Thus the General Conference of 2000 offers the United Methodist Church an unique opportunity to celebrate these twin bicentennials and the dual heritage they represent.

The Conference planners have entrusted the preparation and presentation of this "celebration" to our Center, an undertaking that is going ahead under the leadership of the Director with the assistance of the Media Center of UTS and the cooperation of the General Commission on Archives and History.

The Winter 2000 issue of *Telescope-Messenger* will also focus on these founding events and is scheduled for distribution to all members of the Conference on the morning of this observance.

--James D. Nelson, Center Director

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ANECDOTAGE

BISHOPS ARE HUMAN

In the fall of 1940 we moved from Martinsburg, West Virginia, to Dayton, Ohio, where I became Youth Director of the United Brethren Church. Very much a part of our family were our unpredictable six-year-old daughter Joyce, and a frisky little fox terrier pup who probably thought she was human. She had a very short tail with perpetual motion. Joyce once asked me why Patsy didn't have a long tail like other dogs. Harmlessly, so I thought, I said, "It must have frozen off in the cold West Virginia mountains."

Soon after arriving in our Dayton home, Bishop and Mrs. A. R. Clippinger invited us to their home for dinner. It was a gracious event, and Joyce was the charmer of the evening. Unbelievably, after the meal the bishop got down on his hands and knees with Joyce on his back riding across the floor. The two were living in one world.

During the evening meal the weather turned cold and a slight snow had fallen. The bishop got a shovel and broom to make a pathway to our car. Joyce was concerned--too concerned--and warned, "Be careful, Bishop, or you will freeze off your tail!" Oh, why did I ever say that about Patsy? And why such a daughter? But, who would expect a 62-year-old bishop to play horsey!

Later, during ten of my years as pastor in Westerville, Ohio, Paul M. Herrick was my friendly bishop. During those years the Ohio Southeast Conference held its annual meetings in my church. Most of the delegates roomed in the Otterbein College dormitory and ate in the college cafeteria. For a little more privacy, the bishop and his wife roomed in the college guest house.

Following noon meal one day, the bishop went to his room for a little relaxation before beginning the arduous afternoon session. When the time arrived for the session, there was no bishop. After some delay I became concerned and went to his room to see what might be the problem.

To my surprise, and his embarrassment, I found him locked in the bathroom. The handle to the door had come loose and had dropped to the floor outside the door. When he opened the session he explained what had happened, to the delight of the conference. Said he, "I have heard of conferences which wanted to get rid of their bishop, but this was the sleaziest way of all I ever heard."

Millard J. Miller

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